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"The strange snow-shovel represented in the accompanying illustration (fig. 39), fashioned from the wood of some coniferous tree, was obtained in 1918 from the Copper Eskimo in the vicinity of Tree river, Coronation gulf. Considering the fact that it is made from a single piece of wood, it is of unusual size for an Arctic implement, for it measures 41 inches in length by 20 inches in maximum width, tapering to 3 inches at the proximal end, which is carved to represent a seal's head. Its thickness is one-half to three-quarters of an inch. The front side of the blade is slightly concave, and on its lower edge a strip of caribou-horn is lashed with sinew thongs, the horn being so cut as to present a flat surface against the wood and a sharp cutting edge against the snow. In the middle of the blade, 19 inches from the proximal end, two holes, 6 inches apart, are drilled through the wood. A piece of antler inserted in these holes and held in place with bone pegs functions as a hand-grip. In use the shovel is remarkably well balanced, and a considerable quantity of snow could be carried with it. The implement has been greased with seal-oil, in order that the snow might slip from it easily and that the wood might be strengthened and preserved. [151]

Among the Eskimo a snow-shovel is considered an essential part of the domestic equipment of every family, for it always comes in handy for clearing away the top snow from a proposed camp-site, and it is used also for filling the cracks between the blocks of a new snow-house and for banking loose snow against it, the latter being an important detail of the erection of an iglu in winter.

Because of the lack of raw material for making others, the Eskimo of Coronation gulf do not care to part with their snow-shovels, especially when they are in such good condition as the one here described. In his preliminary report, Stefansson says on this point: 'A wooden snow-shovel made from a single piece of wood is the most difficult article [152] that the Copper Eskimo have to make. It is extremely hard for them to obtain a log large enough so that a shovel can be adzed out of it, and the labor is considerable. A good snow-shovel made from one piece of wood is worth as much as a dog or a very good sled. (1)

The Central and Western Eskimo use three types of snow-shovels: 1) a rude form with a rounded, flat blade made from a piece of bone of the whale, lashed to a separate handle of wood; 2) a form with blade and handle carved from one piece, or with the blade made of several flat pieces of wood lashed together; and 3) the type herein described. A fine example of the first type, from Bering strait, is exhibited in the Eskimo Hall of the Museum. Both the first and second types are illustrated in Nelson's memoir on the

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"1. Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. XIV, no. 1, 1914."

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Eskimo about Bering strait. (2)"

"2. Eighteenth Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, fig. 22, and pl. 35, fig. 4.

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FIG. 39--Snow-shovel from Coronation gulf. (Length, 41 inches.)